
Part XXI

Desert Subregional Plan

San Diego County General Plan

Adopted
January 3, 1979
GPA 78-03
Amended
January 11, 1995
GPA 95-01

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CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I hereby certify that this is the text of the **Desert Subregional Plan**, which consists of a map and this text and that it is a part of the San Diego County General Plan, Section II, Part XXI, as amended by General Plan Amendment (GPA) 95-01, Item 2, and that it was considered by the San Diego County Planning Commission on the 28th day of October 1994.

Edward J. Ferraro, Chair

Attest:

Robert R. Copper, Secretary (Acting)

I hereby certify that this is the text of the **Desert Subregional Plan**, which consists of a map and this text, and that it is part of the San Diego County General Plan, Section II, Part XXI, as amended by General Plan Amendment (GPA) 95-01, and that it was adopted by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors on the 11th day of January 1995.

Dianne Jacob, Chairwoman

Attest:

Thomas J. Pastuszka
Clerk of the Board

Text

Adopted January 3, 1979, GPA 78-03
Latest Amendment January 11, 1995, GPA 95-01

A complete history of the amendments to this Plan is available at the Department of Planning and Land Use.

DESERT SUBREGIONAL PLAN
BORREGO VALLEY AREA

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DESERT SUBREGION
BORREGO VALLEY AREA
PLAN TEXT

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The term "goal" as used herein refers to aims and purposes which are general and timeless and do not readily lend themselves to measurement.

The term "policy" as used herein refers to those principles which guide the allocation of County resources toward prescribed outcomes consistent with the goals.

The goals and policies which follow reflect a thoughtful analysis by the Borrego Springs Sponsor Group and are primarily focused on the needs of the Borrego Valley Community. However, these policies will be generally applicable to the entire subregion. They are a statement by the citizens and the Board of Supervisors as to the kind of total living environment that should be achieved.

It is recognized that legal and economic limitations may hinder the complete attainment of these goals. The fact that the goals may not be completely achieved should in no way hinder every effort to achieve them to the greatest extent possible.

There are 11 elements of the General Plan. They are Regional Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Safety, Seismic Safety, Scenic Highways, Open Space, Recreation, Noise, Conservation and Energy. These subject areas provide the basic structure by which this plan is organized.

Each chapter of the plan represents a subject area which coincides with an adopted element of the General Plan. The purpose of addressing these elements within this plan is to ensure that the goals and policies formulated by the community will be compatible with those found in the General Plan, or, if conflicts exist, they can be readily identified and reconciled. In addition, some policies found in the General Plan elements can be more relevant for one community than for others, and further elaboration or refinement may be appropriate in one case while in another the existing policies might be adequate.

The policies contained in this subregional plan should be regarded as applications of broad General Plan policies which have been designed to fit the specific or unique circumstances existing in the individual communities. Where the existing element adequately addresses an individual community's situation, the subject area may be omitted or a notation to reference the element may be included so that the adopted goals and policies relating to the subject area may be taken into account.

INTRODUCTION

The Borrego Valley is a 70 square-mile privately owned area surrounded by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Agriculture became an important activity in the Valley during the years following World War II, however, by the mid-1960s agricultural pursuits had become less profitable and private planning efforts began to investigate other opportunities.

The environment of the Borrego Valley is its greatest natural resource, and the warm, mild winters make it a prime location for resort development. Clean air, clear skies and proximity to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park are also major factors which add to Borrego Valley's potential as a high-quality and profitable winter resort.

If growth takes place as planned there is some concern as to its impact on the delicate desert environment. The area is fortuitously located over a supply of groundwater which appears to be sufficient to handle the anticipated growth. The effects which growth might have on the quality of the groundwater, however, are important, because groundwater represents, at this time, the only source of water for the Valley. Any significant impact upon the groundwater quality could ultimately detract from the economic viability of the resorts and, in turn, directly impact the quality of life of the permanent, year-round residents. While there is currently no concrete information which would suggest that the forecast population will have a significant impact upon the supply or the quality of the groundwater, this situation should be carefully monitored.

It is impossible to develop any piece of land without having some kind of impact upon the existing natural elements of the environment. A resort-type of development will benefit more so than other types, from the natural beauty of an area, and it is essential to retain the natural elements with as little disruption as possible. The balance between development and environment must be established and maintained for economic, as well as environmental reasons.

In addition to the natural environment, the aesthetic treatment of the "built environment" will have a significant effect upon the success of the Borrego Valley Community. The architectural style of each new building can either enhance community character or detract from it. Identifying the design elements that are basic to the Borrego Valley Community and encouraging architects to work within that context can add greatly to the image of the community and can be a key factor in making a positive impression upon visitors.

The growth taking place in Borrego within the next five years will have a crucial impact on the character of the Valley well into the next century. The plan which follows will attempt to surface and deal with the key factors which may affect the pace of growth, the quality of life and the probabilities of success for the Borrego Valley Community.

1. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

GOAL

PRESERVE THE NATURAL DESERT AMBIANCE AND THE RURAL TOWN CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE VALLEY WHILE ACCOMMODATING GROWTH.

FINDINGS

There are many ways of approaching the question of appropriate site and architectural design; but, in general, design themes should be consistent with historical elements, and they should present what is typically considered to be rustic, desert imagery. Under the circumstances, "Modern" architectural design themes or materials, such as exterior steel and glass, would be inappropriate as would groups of high-rise hotel or office development. The current multi-nodal pattern in the Valley provides an opportunity of exploring different approaches to building within a desert environment, however, the themes within each node should remain consistent. Authentic and, yet, innovative architecture can enhance the overall appearance and enjoyment of the area for both the temporary and year-round residents.

The success of the resorts should provide various employment opportunities and it is important to provide adequate land for low and moderate income persons and families. Aesthetic appearance is as important as affordability, and the climate does not provide much opportunity to screen unsightly or monotonous development with landscaping. As a result, special care should be given to making these developments aesthetically pleasing.

The seasonally intense heat affecting the Borrego Valley has caused problems with the maintenance of standard asphalt residential driveways. As a result, the Offstreet Parking Design Manual has been amended to permit the use of alternate material in certain areas, the Borrego Valley community being one of them. Changes to other policies and standards set by the County Department of Public Works and the Department of Planning and Land Use may be necessary to ensure that they are compatible with the unique circumstances present in the Valley.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Emphasize the intensification of uses on land adjacent to the present commercial core and promote infilling and strengthening of the village image. [P]
2. Retain areas of natural open space in large scale developments. [R]

3. Emphasize drought tolerant landscaping for projects where landscape plans are required. Non-drought-tolerant plants may be used provided they are irrigated by an appropriate low-water-use system. [R]
4. Street lighting shall be limited to the major road intersections such as Palm Canyon Drive and Montezuma Road, Di Giorgio Road, and Borrego Valley Road. [DPW]
5. Commercial property lighting shall emphasize down-lighting. Security lighting shall be allowed but limited to that essential to the function. [DPW]
6. Mobilehome parks shall be located away from major entrance roads into the commercial core. Such development should be discouraged along Palm Canyon Drive from Montezuma Valley Road to Borrego Valley Road; and Borrego Springs Road from Verbena Road to Yaqui Pass Road. [R, P]
7. Grant waivers to exempt new construction in the Borrego Valley from installing improvements such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks and lined channels unless it can be shown that they are necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare. Adequacy of such improvements shall be determined by the Director of the Department of Public Works. Consider adopting an ordinance that would exempt the Borrego Valley from meeting the street improvement requirements mentioned above. [DPW]
8. Consider the propagation of indigenous plants and recommend their use in landscaping plans. [GEN]
9. Conduct a study which would identify the significant design elements in the Borrego Valley area and make recommendations on how these can be applied to various structures and uses. [Sp]
10. Site Plans should emphasize use and activity linkages with the lands surrounding the planning area. [R]
11. Site designs should attempt to integrate the activities of adjoining parcels. [R]

2. LAND USE ELEMENT

GENERAL GOAL

PROVIDE A LAND USE PATTERN WHICH WILL ACCOMMODATE GROWTH WHILE MINIMIZING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.

FINDINGS

The Regional Land Use Element of the General Plan contains a full description of each land use designation; and it is required that the Borrego Valley Community Plan maintain consistency with the General Plan.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The land use categories and designations contained in the General Plan Land Use Element are hereby adopted by reference and will be used to implement this community plan. [P]
2. Provide areas of reduced density adjacent to the State Parks wherever subdivisions have not already occurred as a transition between the two areas. [P]
3. Preserve the eastern half of the Valley from urban uses because of its distance from the town center. [P]

RESIDENTIAL GOAL

PROVIDE A PATTERN OF RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES WHICH WILL MEET THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS OF ALL THE CITIZENS OF THE PLANNING AREA WHILE RETAINING THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

FINDINGS

Growth is desired in Borrego Springs because the Valley needs additional residents to assure an adequate tax base for needed public services and to provide an economic base sufficient for a functioning community.

Additional residential subdivisions are appropriate as a means of accommodating this growth as the ownership pattern of existing vacant lots does not provide an economic means for production housing.

The airport may expand in the future and, due to the increase in noise and activity typically associated with airports, residential development should be discouraged from the areas which could be affected by such expansion.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Growth should be accommodated by providing for additional subdivisions and by increasing the density on existing close-in residential lots where compatible with private covenants. [P]

2. Increase the residential density allowed on existing subdivided lots adjacent to the Town Center and also along Borrego Springs Road from Big Horn Road south to San Pablo, and at the Deep Well Trail area as an incentive to construct apartments and in-fill residential uses. [P]
3. Locate higher density residential development in areas adjacent to the existing residentially subdivided land and Di Giorgio Road. [P]
4. Utilize the appropriate plan designations and zones which allow for the development of residences designed to serve the needs of low or moderate income families and senior citizens. Locate such sites where they will be convenient to shopping, cultural and recreational facilities; and ensure that they are compatible with adjacent uses. [P]
5. Increase residential densities along arterials and adjacent to the town center to make these existing subdivided lots more attractive for development. [P]
6. Concentrate development in the existing subdivided area and those areas adjacent to it. [P]
7. Concentrate higher density development in areas logically served by sewer lines and other public utilities. [P]
8. Town Center: The commercial core at the Christmas Circle area should be surrounded by an area of higher density that will provide the opportunity to construct multi-family units. Multi-family units are also appropriate for the major roads leading into the core, including Palm Canyon from Montezuma Valley Road east to Borrego Valley Road; and on Borrego Springs Road from Big Horn Road to San Pablo. [P]
9. East Central Area: This area, which extends from the Section Line west of Di Giorgio Road to the Section Line east of Borrego Valley Road and from an extension of Granada Drive south to the Section Line north of Rango Way, is an appropriate area for modular homes, mobilehomes and recreational vehicle parks. [P]
10. Airport Area: Residential uses, such as mobilehome parks or modular home parks would be appropriate south of Palm Canyon Drive. Residential uses should be discouraged on lands located to the north, west and east of the airport. [P]
11. South Valley Area: Emphasize high quality residential-resort development. Other uses may be appropriate but should be located so as not to be a detriment to the primary use of the area. [P]

12. Northwest Valley Area: If residential development occurs in this area north of Big Horn Road and west of the Section Line between Borrego Springs Road and Di Giorgio Road, it should be consistent with the high quality development of the De Anza Desert Country Club and the Indian Head Ranch. [P]
13. Additional residential development should utilize the "Planned Residential Development" (PRD) approach. Clustering of residential development, however, is prohibited on FCI affected lands as stipulated in the (23) National Forest and State Parks Land Use Designation in the Land Use Element.

COMMERCIAL GOAL

PROVIDE A DISTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL LAND USES ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

FINDINGS

Borrego Springs is uniquely situated as an island surrounded by the Anza Borrego Desert State Park, and so requires commercial acreage which may exceed the service level for the local population. Over one million people a year visit the park, and Borrego Springs is the main source for commercial service. The Christmas Circle commercial area represents the main concentration of commercial use, and should be retained as the principle commercial center of the Valley. Secondary commercial development is appropriate and necessary in other areas of the Valley, but should be concentrated in existing commercial nodes. Commercial strip development has a negative impact on traffic circulation and the visual environment and should be avoided.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Retain the Christmas Circle area as the principal general commercial center of the valley. [P]
2. Concentrate secondary commercial development in a limited number of nodes around the valley to serve the different requirements for general commercial, service commercial and visitor-serving commercial. [P]
3. General Commercial: The primary general commercial area shall remain concentrated along Palm Canyon Drive and Borrego Springs Road and in the Christmas Circle area. More limited general commercial nodes are appropriate at Yaqui Pass and Borrego Springs Road, adjacent to the entrance of Rams Hill C.C. and in the airport area. [P]
4. Service Commercial: The primary service commercial area shall remain in the Stirrup Road area although secondary areas are appropriate adjacent to the airport and at a southern location such as Rango Way. [P]

5. Visitor Serving Commercial: Appropriate locations are at the entrances to the Valley such as Palm Canyon Drive and Montezuma Valley Road, Borrego Springs Road and Yaqui Pass Road, adjacent to the airport, as well as in areas along the major roads through the Valley. [P]
6. Design control is most appropriate for large acreages designated for Visitor-Serving Commercial. It is less appropriate for small parcels or parcels after they have had substantial development. Where the "D" special area designator has been applied, it shall require a Site Plan that preserves the Country Town character of Borrego, and landscaping that is desert tolerant. [R]

AGRICULTURE GOAL

PROVIDE A LAND USE PATTERN WHICH ALLOWS FOR THE CONTINUATION OF AGRICULTURAL USES WHICH EMPLOY LOW WATER CONSUMPTION AND CONSERVATION.

FINDINGS

Agriculture in the Valley is not as significant to the local economy as it once was. While in some areas agriculture may enhance open space needs, in a desert environment it can detract from the natural appearance of the landscape. In addition agricultural activities involve a high level of water use. Therefore, the benefit from retaining agricultural uses within the Valley is not as great as it would be in urban fringe locales. Any review of requests to convert agricultural lands to higher uses should take these factors into consideration.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Retain agricultural uses that are compatible with the environment. [GEN]
2. Do not limit conversion of agricultural lands to other uses. [GEN]
3. Maintain the use of suitable land for orchards and groves through application of low density land use designations and zoning on those sites devoted to agricultural uses. [P]

INDUSTRIAL GOAL

PROVIDE FOR THE KINDS OF INDUSTRIAL LAND USES WHICH WILL NOT DETRACT FROM THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY.

FINDINGS

Industrial land use is fundamental in providing an economic base sufficient for a functioning community. Industrial land is desired in Borrego Springs to attract clean, limited impact industrial corporations, which will in turn assure an adequate tax base needed for public services, facilities, and improvements.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage environmentally clean, light industrial activity to provide a broader employment base for the community. [P, R]
2. Industrial uses shall be limited to those classified as light industrial or limited impact. [P, R]
3. Industrial sites should be clustered away from residential and adjacent to major roads. [P, R]
4. Areas adjacent to the County Airport should be designated and zoned for light industrial activities. [P]

SPECIFIC PLAN AREAS

RAMS HILL SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Rams Hill Specific Plan is a hotel and residential resort project under development by the Di Giorgio Development Corporation on a 3,140 acre parcel in the Borrego Valley. The project includes a golf course, tennis courts, a hotel, commercial area, residences, and Scripps Medical Clinic. The eastern half of the project has been dedicated as undeveloped open space. The project also maintains its own wastewater treatment facility at the northern end of the property. A multi-million-dollar flood control system has also been provided. The project has three basic types of residential units: planned development units, custom homes on quarter acre lots, and custom built estate homes on two to five acre lots. Access is provided by Yaqui Pass Road and Borrego Springs Road. The Rams Hill Specific Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 7, 1980.

BORREGO COUNTRY CLUB SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

Borrego Country Club is a large scale resort-oriented community project on 1075 acres in Borrego Springs. The Specific Plan includes 835 residential units of five proposed types: single-family attached, single-family detached, patio homes, ranchettes (5 ac.), and ranches (10 ac.). Also included is a 210 unit hotel and restaurant, golf course, public park, commercial and professional office facilities and wastewater treatment facility. Access is by Tilting T Drive and Foursome Drive East. The project is owned by Federated Development Company of Los Angeles. Development of this project has not yet begun. The Board of Supervisors approved the Borrego Country Club Specific Plan on May 20, 1983.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Borrego Springs Country Club: The Borrego Springs Country Club Specific Plan provides that it will expire seven years after its adoption on May 1, 1983, unless a Tentative Map has been approved for the first unit of Phase I. If the existing approved plan does expire, any new plan shall be consistent with the requirements of this plan including such measures assuring

reclaimed water for all heavy water use landscaping. [R]

THE ROADRUNNER SPECIFIC PLAN AREA

This proposed Specific Plan Project is divided into three development elements: The Roadrunner Club, the Springs at Borrego, and a Mini-Mobilehome Park. The Roadrunner Club is an existing 325 space, rental mobilehome park with related clubhouse and recreational facilities and an 18 hole, Par 3 golf course, open to the public. The mobilehome park is to be expanded to 571 spaces with a new tennis and swim club for use by residents of the mobilehome park.

The Springs at Borrego is a proposed 584 space, rental recreational vehicle, golf and country club with a 9 hole, regulation golf course open to the public.

The Mini-Mobilehome Park is a proposed 25 space, rental, mobilehome park that will be used by the owner and developer to provide low cost housing for employees and other low-income persons.

The total yield of the entire Specific Plan area is 1180 units which is less than the maximum 4.3 dwelling units/acre allowed by the General Plan.

THE MESQUITE TRAILS RANCH SPECIFIC PLANNING AREA

This specific planning area shall be developed at a density of 1.55 dwelling units per acre. The site shall be used for a recreational vehicle park allowing individual ownership of the RV lots if the project is designed to have lots no smaller than 1,500 square feet and to be developed consistent with the general criteria for a standard mobilehome park as established under Section 6518 of The Zoning Ordinance. These criteria shall be utilized in addition to those appropriate to a recreational vehicle facility as specified under Section 6450 through 6460 of The Zoning Ordinance.

3. HOUSING

GOAL

ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE, AFFORDABLE SHELTER IS PROVIDED FOR ALL RESIDENTS IN A WAY THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE VALLEY.

FINDINGS

The Housing Element of the General Plan sets forth goals, policies and action programs which are designed to adequately provide for the housing needs of all economic segments of the County. In most cases the policies and action programs are targeted toward the larger, more urbanized communities, however, there are some policies which involve issues affecting all parts of the County.

Housing for low income households and emergency housing for the homeless are

of regional concern but such housing has been traditionally provided in the more urbanized sections of the County. However, as growth takes place in the Borrego Valley, or as socio-economic changes occur problems could arise if housing for these groups is not planned.

Households that utilize multi-family housing will most likely come from the "very low", "low" or "moderate" income groups. The income levels for these groups are related to the median as follows:

- very low income is less than 50% of the median;
- low income is between 50% and 80% of the median;
- moderate income is between 80% and 120% of the median.

The acreage provided in the land use section of this plan should be adequate to meet the housing needs of the area's low and moderate income households.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Take those steps necessary to ensure that the private sector is able to provide for the housing needs of the Subregion's low and moderate income households. [P]
2. Designate appropriate parcels within the Valley for multi-family or mixed use development. [P]
3. Identify and inventory areas with underused infrastructure. This could be instrumental in minimizing housing costs, as well as actualizing economics from infilling. [P]
4. Study and determine if there is a need for farm employee housing in the Subregion. [I]
5. Study and determine if there is a need for creating emergency housing for the homeless in the Subregion. [I]
6. Provide incentives for builders or developers to voluntarily incorporate energy conservation features, that go beyond the State Title 24 mandated measures, or which address different areas, in new residential construction or in the expansion of existing housing. [R]
7. If a project is in conformance with the General Plan and it is located in a community or subregional plan area for which a certified EIR has been prepared, the EIR may be used as a master environmental assessment. This would provide the applicant with a central source of current information on potential regional impacts, including the cumulative and growth inducing impacts of the project, making it necessary to address only site specific impacts. [P, R]

8. Modify and update building codes and standards so that they reflect current housing needs, and eliminate or reduce unnecessary or outmoded restrictions. [B]

4. CIRCULATION

GOAL

IMPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE AND EFFICIENTLY MAINTAINED TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY.

FINDINGS

The circulation system of an area should be planned to accomplish a number of objectives which would include the following:

1. Accommodation of different modes;
2. Coordination of development with the expansion of land uses;
3. The safe, convenient and efficient movement of people and goods; and
4. Systems design which conforms to the applicable environmental quality standards of the County.

The improvement of the circulation system is accomplished gradually as development occurs through the conditioning of development proposals submitted for consideration through the discretionary review process.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a network of roads consistent with the safety and traffic requirements of the General Plan. [T]
2. Modify the existing circulation system so that it is consistent with the anticipated level of growth described in the Land Use Chapter. [T]
3. Priority for the construction of additional roads in the Valley should be given to the extension of Yaqui Pass Road north of Rango Way to Palm Canyon Drive and secondly Hoberg Road to Big Horn. [T, DPW]
4. When reviewing subdivisions and Site Plans, access onto major and primary arterial highways shall be controlled by minimizing driveways and local streets so as not to impair the function and capacity of the system. [T]

5. Require the dedication of necessary rights-of-way for the development and improvement of arterials shown on the Circulation Element in conjunction with development of adjacent land. [T]
6. Utilize the appropriate transportation analytical tools to aid in planning a system which would provide for the mobility needs generated by the various types of land uses within Borrego Valley. [T]
7. Evaluate proposed amendments to the Land Use Elements and the phasing of major development proposals for impact on the classifications and level of service provided by the circulation system. [P, T]
8. Through design and alignment studies, plan and develop roads which, to the maximum extent possible, follow natural contours in order to minimize cuts and fills while meeting the minimum road design standards for safety. [T]
9. Through design and alignment studies, plan and develop roads in a manner which minimizes or mitigates impacts associated with crossing of flood plains, geological risk and earthquake zones, wildlife, unique geological and resource conservation and open space areas, and currently designated agricultural areas. [T]

5. PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES and IMPROVEMENTS

GOAL

PROVIDE SERVICES AND FACILITIES THAT ARE ADEQUATE, EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AND COMMENSURATE WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF A COMMUNITY IN AN ISOLATED LOCATION.

FINDINGS

Fire Protection

The Borrego Springs Fire Protection District, formed in 1961, provides structural and ground cover fire protection; and rescue services. It currently (1986) covers the approximately 300 square miles which make up the community of Borrego Springs which has a population of about 1,800. The District operates one fire station staffed by 11 full-time personnel and five volunteers. Its equipment consists of three pumpers, one rescue vehicle, one ambulance and two off-road ambulances. All ambulance personnel are County Certified EMT 1A's.

Another Fire Station is planned for construction at Ram's Hill.

Police

The San Diego County Sheriffs Department and the California Highway Patrol provide police protection in the Desert Subregion. Currently there exists two resident Highway Patrol officers, and one County sheriff's deputy. A second sheriff has been authorized but not yet assigned to the Desert. The Anza-Borrego State Park rangers also maintain peace officer powers, and provide protection throughout the Desert Subregion.

The County Sheriff receives an average of 42 priority calls per week in the Desert Subregion. A priority call represents a threat or danger to one's life or property. The sheriff's average response time to a priority call in the Desert is 24.3 minutes. Response time for non-priority calls is 33 minutes. The County average response times for priority calls in rural areas is 18.1 minutes, and 29.5 minutes for non-priority calls.

Water and Sewer Service

The Desert Subregional Plan Area receives sewer and water service from numerous agencies, the most comprehensive being the Borrego Water District. The Borrego Water District encompasses approximately 45 square miles of the Borrego Valley. The Borrego Water District was established in 1961 in order to protect groundwater resources in Borrego Valley. In December, 1979, the latent powers of the District were activated by the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission to provide water and sewer services to the Rams Hill Development. The project area was subsequently annexed to the District in September, 1980. In January, 1986, LAFCo approved the town center sewer project, which involved annexation to the Borrego Water District of 2,177 acres under a latent powers proposal to extend sewer service to over 2000 acres in Borrego Springs. The sewer service utilizes existing treatment facilities located at Rams Hill. Service is provided via a sewer line extending from Rams Hill treatment plant approximately 7.2 miles north along Borrego Valley Road, and west along Palm Canyon Drive to Montezuma Valley Road. The Borrego Water District also maintains pest control and flood control powers.

School Service

A total of five school districts serve at least a portion of the Subregion. Within the Valley the Borrego Unified School District provides both primary and secondary school services. The district has two schools, the Borrego Springs Elementary (K-6) on Palm Canyon Drive at Borrego Valley Road and the Borrego Springs High (7-12) on Diegueno Road. District offices are located at the high school. Other school districts serving portions of the Subregion include Warner Union School District, Julian Union School District, the Julian Union High School District, and the Mountain Empire Unified School District.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. County plans and budgeting for future facilities and Services in the Borrego area shall recognize that residents living in this isolated location may require higher levels of services than those in the metropolitan areas of the County as there is less opportunity to use alternative facilities. [F]
2. Where flood improvements are constructed, natural appearing banks will be used where feasible. [DPW]

6. CONSERVATION

ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL

PRESERVE THE UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES OF THE BORREGO VALLEY WHICH ARE ENJOYED BY BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND VISITORS.

FINDINGS

The Borrego Valley contains a variety of natural resources which include:

- Clean, healthful air which benefits residents and rejuvenates visitors;
- Clear skies which are an important part of the desert ambiance, but which also are essential to furthering the effective use of the observatories at Mt. Palomar and Mt. Laguna.
- Wildflower displays which are an important tourist attraction during the spring;
- Mesquite woodlands which are important wildlife habitats; and
- A substantial supply of groundwater which may be susceptible to degradation through improper use. This is of particular concern because groundwater, for years to come, will be the Valley's sole source of water.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Emphasize conservation and the judicious use of water in both new residential developments and agriculture. [GEN]
2. Preserve the dark night sky as a natural resource enjoyed by residents and visitors to the desert. Dark sky is also essential to the effective operations of the nearby observatories. [R, DPW]
3. The existing pristine clean air shall be protected by concentrating development in the western arc of the Valley adjacent to existing development. [P]

4. Identify and apply the Scenic Area(S) Special Area Designator to sites where significant natural landmarks are located. [P]
5. Identify and apply the Historic District Preservation Area(H) Special Area Designator to sites and structures which are historically significant. [P]
6. To protect the dark night skies, which are necessary for the proper utilization of the nearby observatories, the lighting ordinance shall be revised so that the intensity of lights and the number necessary for safety purposes can be kept at an absolute minimum. [DPW]
7. Identify and apply the Environmentally Constrained Area (ECA) Regional Category to areas containing rare and endangered plant and animal species, archaeological sites, agricultural preserves, and other environmentally sensitive sites that may experience adverse impacts from development. [P]
8. Where new development occurs preserve and re-use existing native flora on the site to the extent feasible and practical. [R]
9. Use treated effluent for watering golf courses and other high water use areas. [GEN]
10. Landscaping requiring more than moderate water use should be limited to intensive use areas; recreational areas where it is a necessity; or occasional specimen plantings. Non-drought-tolerant landscaping should emphasize low-water-use irrigation systems. [GEN]
11. Take those steps necessary to preserve "Old Borrego" as an Historical Site. [P, R]
12. Discourage development on slopes exceeding 25% in order to prevent scarring. [P]
13. Designate the area north of the Sink as an Environmentally Constrained Area. [P]

FLOOD CONTROL GOAL

PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY FROM FLOOD HAZARD WHILE MINIMIZING ANY DISRUPTION TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

FINDINGS

Flooding is a problem in the desert. During the summer months, tropical storms cause flash flooding which can spread unpredictably over the alluvial fans at the mouth of every canyon. This is especially a problem in the Borrego Valley where the most intense development in the Desert exists. The Desert Subregion, and the Borrego Valley itself, sustained major damage from tropical storm Kathleen in 1976, and tropical storm Doreen in 1977. Future severe tropical storms are

certain, and proper planning is essential if damage from these storms is to be minimized.

In 1972 the Board of Supervisors approved a General Plan for Flood Control Improvements in the Borrego Valley. This plan was a preliminary study which identified flood hazards in Borrego Valley and evaluated alternative methods for minimizing those hazards. Lack of public funding has precluded construction of most facilities identified in the study. A follow-up study is proposed to incorporate recent developments in desert flood control methods which are less costly.

A private development, Rams Hill, has provided extensive flood control improvements on its property. Flood control techniques implemented as part of this project provide a good example for other desert projects.

Currently the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has an alluvial fan study underway. Preliminary data is available at this time. In order for citizens in the unincorporated areas of the County to retain the ability to buy flood insurance, the federal maps must be used as a basis for regulation of developments.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a new flood control plan based on current information and concepts. [DPW]
2. Encourage private development to incorporate effective desert flood control measures into their projects. [DPW]
3. Utilize the conclusions and recommendations of the FEMA study, when completed, to regulate development in those areas identified as being most susceptible to flood hazard. [R]
4. Ensure that tax assessments for properties located within flood hazard areas are commensurate with the associated restrictions on use. [GEN]

7. OPEN SPACE

GOAL

PROVIDE A SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACE WHICH IS ADEQUATE TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE NATURAL ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY.

FINDINGS

The state legislature has found that the preservation of open space is necessary for:

1. Maintenance of the economy of the State;
2. The continued availability of land for the production of food and fiber;

3. The enjoyment of scenic beauty;
4. Recreation; and
5. The use of natural resources.

Typically, land becomes open space through the implementation of specific policies from other General Plan elements like Conservation, Seismic Safety, Noise, Scenic Highway, Safety or Recreation. The main purpose of the Open Space Element is to form these various areas into an integrated system. It may, however, become necessary to enact specific provisions of the Open Space Element to protect land which would be necessary to connect isolated areas to the main contiguous open space system.

A great deal of scenic and recreational value is gained from the presence of the Anza-Borrego State Park within the Subregion. The Land Use Plan has been designed to ensure that a transition between public parkland and private developable land is established. This has been accomplished by designating those parcels adjacent to the Park for low intensity uses with large minimum lot sizes.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance health and safety and conserve natural resources through the preservation of open space. [P, R]
2. Provide recreational opportunities through the preservation of open space. [DP&R, P]
3. Preserve existing publicly and privately owned open space easements. [P, R]
4. During review of large scale developments require the use of planned residential developments to cluster structures and leave areas of natural open space. Clustering of residential development, however, is prohibited on FCI affected lands as stipulated in the (23) National Forest and State Parks Land Use Designation in the Land Use Element. [R]

8. RECREATION

GOAL

PROVIDE A VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES WHICH WILL MEET THE NEEDS AND ENRICH THE LIVES OF ALL THE RESIDENTS OF, AND VISITORS TO, THE PLANNING AREA.

FINDINGS

Existing Local Park Facilities (Borrego Valley Community)

Borrego Springs Youth Center - Borrego Springs Youth Center, Inc., has entered into an agreement with the County to provide acquisition, design, construction, park maintenance and operation services at the Youth Center site. The center is located on a 2.53 acre parcel of land to be expanded by 4.91 acres in 1986. Acquisition and new development is to take place as a joint effort between the County Parks Department and the Borrego Springs Youth Center.

Christmas Circle is a park area owned and maintained by the Borrego Springs Community Association, a private property owners association. The County has provided funds from the "Transient Occupancy Tax" for park improvements and maintenance because the park provides a significant recreational space for local residents and visitors to the Valley.

Existing Regional Park Facilities Within the Subregion

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park - Anza-Borrego State Park consists of over 600,000 acres and is owned and operated by the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation. Private inholdings in the park comprise approximately 60,000 acres. Facilities within Anza-Borrego State Park include two developed campgrounds - Borrego Palm Canyon and Tamarisk Grove, and ten primitive campgrounds scattered throughout the park. There are over 500 miles of hiking, riding, and off-road vehicle trails and free camping is allowed throughout the park.

Agua Caliente Springs Park - This 915 acre desert park is operated and maintained by the County Parks Department and leased from the Bureau of Land Management and the State Parks Commission. Facilities include four (4) natural springs, caravan and individual camping, hiking trails, picnicking, bath house, play equipment and recreation building.

Vallecito Stage Station Historic Site and Park - This 71 acre park and historic site is owned and operated by the County Parks Department. Facilities include the restored Stage Station, caravan and individual camping, picnicking and play area.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Anza-Borrego State Park is integral to the economic base of the Desert Subregion, and it should be maintained for the recreational enjoyment of both residents and visitors. [DPR]
2. The San Diego County Parks Department and local Sponsor Groups shall cooperate in efforts to meet the local park needs of the citizens of the Desert Subregion. [DPR]

3. Ensure that the use of local park land dedication fees collected from the "Borrego Valley Area" are used exclusively for the development of a community center or local park. Priority for the future allocation of parkland dedication fees should emphasize local park and seniors' facilities in the Borrego Valley Area.
4. Provide adequate recreational support services including visitor commercial uses. [P]
5. Utilize compatible plan designations and zones which do not detract from the recreational aspects of the area. [P]
6. Local Park Standards [DPR]

The Recreation Element of the County General Plan recommends the standard of 15 acres of local park land for every 1000 persons. The Desert Subregion compares to this standard as follows:

<u>Planning Area</u>	<u>1986 Local Park Average</u>	<u>1986 Population</u>	<u>2000 Projected Population</u>
Borrego Springs *Includes 1986 acquisition of 4.91 acres.	7.44	2,527	4,000

Or 3 acres per 1000 population for 1986 or 1.86 acres per 1000 population for 2000.

7. Future Development - Local Facilities
 - a. Although the Desert Subregion currently does not meet general standards for local park acreage, it is not a priority to expand these holdings as the region contains approximately 600,000 acres in regional facilities that also serve local residents. [DP]
 - b. If population rises beyond current projections and needs are identified in other communities in the Subregion for local park facilities, acquisition and development can occur as additional local park funding accrues and local park operation and maintenance capabilities are organized. [DP]

9. SEISMIC SAFETY

GOAL

MAXIMIZE SEISMIC SAFETY WITHIN THE DESERT SUBREGIONAL AREA TO SAFEGUARD BOTH THE CITIZENRY AND PROPERTY.

FINDINGS

Current grading and building plan review procedures ensure that new construction meets seismic safety standards.

10. SCENIC HIGHWAYS

GOAL

PROTECT AND ENHANCE SCENIC, HISTORICAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES WITHIN SCENIC HIGHWAY CORRIDORS.

FINDINGS

The 18.2 miles of State Route 78, from the western to the eastern boundary of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is an existing official Scenic Highway and has been identified as such in the Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan.

Two other Scenic Highways exist within the Desert Subregion: Old Overland Stage Route (S2) from the Imperial County line north to State Route 78; and Montezuma Valley Road, Hoberg Road and Truckhaven Trail (S22) from the western boundary of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park to the Imperial County Line.

POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Any actions affecting land use within scenic highway corridors should emphasize the protection and enhancement of scenic resources. [P, R]
2. Consider conducting a corridor study of the route which starts with Montezuma Valley road to the west and continues east along Hoberg Road and Truckhaven Trail (S22) up to the Imperial County Line. [S, T]
3. Locate bikeways along designated scenic highways wherever possible. [T]

POLICY CODE EXPLANATION

The responsibility for carrying out the policies of this community/subregional plan does not lie solely with the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU). The cooperation of private property owners, developers, decision-makers and numerous other entities both public and private is necessary to make these policies successful.

A code has been placed at the end of each policy in the plan text which identifies it with the County department or the sub-departmental section of the Department of Planning and Land Use which would be most likely to take the lead in carrying out the policy (see below). In addition, there is a category for those policies that are of general concern to all persons or groups that might be involved in development or plan implementation.

This approach can make detailed information regarding policies easier to locate and it can aid staff in charting the progress of the plan.

CODE

GEN	Policy of General Application
DPW	Department of Public Works
DPR	Department of Parks and Recreation
DHS	Department of Health Services
DPLU	Department of Planning and Land Use
F	- Facilities Planning
E	- Economics and Demographics
Pr	- Process Simplification
G	- Graphics Section
W	- Water Section
S	- Systems Coordination and Data Processing
T	- Transportation Planning Section
I	- Plan Implementation Section
Sp	- Special Projects Section
P	- Plan Development Section
R	- Regulatory Division
B	- Building Codes Enforcement
Z	- Zoning Codes Enforcement

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